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Mary of Magdala

by Paul Heyse

translated by William Winter

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MARY OF MAGDALA

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MARY OF MAGDALA

AN HISTORICAL AND ROMANTIC DRAMA

IN FIVE ACTS

THE ORIGINAL IN GERMAN PROSE
By PAUL HEYSE

THE TRANSLATION FREELY ADAPTED
AND WRITTEN IN ENGLISH VERSE
By WILLIAM WINTER

"Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the image of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up:
My fault is past."
—SHAKESPEARE.

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PREFACE

It is suggested to the readers and spectators of the drama of "Mary of Magdala" that it aims to depict a fanciful state of facts and circumstances, such as might have existed anterior to the establishment of Christianity, at a time when Jesus of Nazareth — around whom, although he is not introduced, the action circulates — was viewed exclusively as a man, and had not yet, in the eyes of any considerable number of persons, been invested with a sacred character. The picture of his personality that has been made in these imaginary scenes might seem sacrilegious, if this point of view were ignored. The allusions to him, under the various designations of Preacher, Prophet, Nazarene, etc., by Caiaphas, the High Priest of Jerusalem, by Flavius, the young Roman soldier, and by Judas, — here presented as a Hebrew patriot, — are such as might naturally be made, by different orders of men, with reference to a being human like themselves, and not, to their minds, in any sense divine; and, accordingly, these allusions should not be misconstrued as intending to disparage a Christian ideal. The defection of Judas from his leader is ascribed to loss of faith in that leader's ability and purpose forcibly to free the Jews from bondage to Rome, while his subsequent betrayal of that leader is attributed to frenzied rage, — Judas and Mary of Magdala having been lovers, and Mary, in her contrition and in her practical regeneration, having broken that alliance, repudiated him, and given her heart to Heaven. The tendency of the drama, in the English form, as here printed, while telling a romantic story of action and depict-

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ing aspects of Hebrew life in ancient Jerusalem, is to diffuse an influence of charity and to suggest the celestial victory of a human soul, triumphant over sin and sorrow, through belief in Divine goodness. The German original — upon a rough, literal translation of which the present play has been built — is human and compassionate in spirit; but it is neither poetical nor spiritual, and, in some particulars, it lacks refinement. Its exposition of the heroine's shame is somewhat needlessly specific and ample; its portrayal of Flavius, the young Roman lover, is carnal and coarse; and it makes the motive of Judas not only the fanatical resentment of a disappointed patriot, but the sensual jealousy of a discarded paramour. In its original form it would have proved offensive; in fact, it could not have been presented. The present adaptation, which was first written in prose and then rewritten in verse, presents the component parts of the original; but, in its treatment of them, it follows a free course, making essential modifications, alike in the structure, the character, and the tone, and resulting in a paraphrase. Upon a first reading of the German drama it seemed impracticable for the English stage; but a later study of it prompted the thought that, since the subject represented by the Magdalen has, whether for good or evil, become a stock theme in theatrical composition and almost continually recurrent on the stage, a salutary influence might, perhaps, be diffused by utilizing this fabric in a modified form; showing this representative type of degraded womanhood as a repentant sinner, and indicating — without either a specious embellishment of vicious life or a sentimental appeal to maudlin sympathy — the only refuge, comfort, and hope that the penitent can ever find.

The introduction of this play to the English-speaking stage is due to the confident judgment and resolute purpose of Mr. Har-

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rison Grey Fiske — who early perceived its dramatic as well as ethical value, and never doubted its practical worth — and to the intrepid spirit and fine interpretative instinct and faculty of Mrs. Fiske — who brought to the impersonation of its principal character a profound sympathy with human suffering, an acute sensibility, and authentic emotional force. The play, in its English form, was first acted on October 23, 1902, at Milwaukee; it reached Chicago on October 27; and on November 19 it was presented in New York, at the Manhattan Theatre, where it held its course, in ample public favor, till February 28, 1903, when Mrs. Fiske took it on a tour, which is still in progress.

W. W.

New Brighton, Staten Island, New York.
June 18, 1903.

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"The Jews, . . . animated with a fiercer zeal and a more jealous faith, perceived the gradual separation of their Nazarene brethren from the doctrine of the synagogue, and they would gladly have extinguished the dangerous heresy in the blood of its adherents."

"We may learn from Josephus ("Antiquitat." xviii. 3), that the procuratorship of Pilate corresponded with the last ten years of Tiberius, A.D. 27–37. As to the particular time of the death of Christ, a very early tradition fixed it to the 25th of March, under the consulship of the two Gemini."

"From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius the Jews discovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the most furious massacres and insurrections. . . . The enthusiasm of the Jews was supported by the opinion that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous master, and by the flattering promise, which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Messiah would soon arise, destined to break their fetters and to invest the favorites of heaven with the empire of the earth."

"The Jews were a nation; the Christians were a sect. . . . By embracing the faith of the Gospel the Christians incurred the supposed guilt of an unnatural and unpardonable offence."

— GIBBON.

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"One fatal remembrance, one shadow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes;
To which life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, and affliction no sting."

— MOORE.

"Man-like is it to fall into sin,
Fiend-like is it to dwell therein,
Christ-like is it for sin to grieve,
God-like is it all sin to leave."

— From the "Sinngedichte" of FRIEDRICH VON LOGAU,
Translated by LONGFELLOW.

"What shall I do to live aright?
My life is wrong; I feel it so:
I bear about a muffled woe,
I perish with a nameless blight . . .
This is my sorrow day and night . . .
My life is wrong! My life is wrong!
What shall I do to make it right?"

— RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

"Pilgrim, burdened with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate!
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock, and weep, and watch, and wait!
Knock — he hears the sinner's cry!
Weep — he heeds the mourner's tear!
Watch — for saving grace is nigh!
Wait — till Heavenly Love appear!"

— "Sir Eustace Grey," CRABBE.

"For, though seduc'd, and led astray,
Thou'st travell'd far and wander'd long,
Thy God hath seen thee, all the way,
And all the turns that led thee wrong."

— "The Hall of Justice," CRABBE.

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Mary of Magdala

ACT I

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PERSONS REPRESENTED

CAIAPHAS. High Priest of Jerusalem.

AULUS FLAVIUS. A Roman nobleman and soldier, nephew to PONTIUS PILATE, and employed, under Pilate, in the Roman consular service at Jerusalem.

QUINTUS. Secretary to FLAVIUS.

HARAN. A young Syrian, a native of Sidon, visiting Jerusalem as a traveller and the guest of CAIAPHAS.

JOTHAM. A profligate young Hebrew.

JOAB. Son of CAIAPHAS, dedicated to the priesthood, companion to JOTHAM.

GAMALIEL. A young priest, attendant on CAIAPHAS.

JUDAS OF KERIOTH. A Hebrew patriot.

SIMON. An old Hebrew; a convert to Christianity.

ENOS. A friend of SIMON.

MACRO. Steward to FLAVIUS.

MARY OF MAGDALA.

RACHEL. An elderly Hebrew woman, attendant on MARY.

MIRIAM. A young Hebrew woman, at first servant to FLAVIUS, afterward to SIMON.

A TORCH-BEARER. Attendant on FLAVIUS.

Roman Soldiers, Hebrew Priests, Men and Women of Jerusalem, Jews, Christians, Egyptian Dancing Girls, etc.

PERIOD OF THE DRAMA: The reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, who was born B.C. 42 and died A.D. 37 — reigning from A.D. 14 to A.D. 37. The scene of the play is Jerusalem.

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ACT I

TIME: Evening

SCENE: A room in the house of MARY OF MAGDALA, at Jerusalem

The room should be spacious and handsome. A wide doorway at back, draped and partly covered with a rich, heavy curtain. A dimly lighted anteroom, visible through this doorway, with a door, C., opening to the street. A door L. and a door R. Down at L., a couch. Opposite, at R., a low table and a cushioned seat. On table a jug of wine, several wine-cups, and a dish containing oranges, dates, and figs. Several low seats, placed against the walls. Three lamps, each on a pedestal. RACHEL *is discovered.*

Enter MARY, *L.*

MARY

Another day, and yet no word of him.

RACHEL

I ever thought that he would bring you grief.
Once you were gay, and this house rang with music:
The proudest of Jerusalem came here,
And he that gain'd your smile was crown'd a prince:
Then came dark Judas — and all this was chang'd.

MARY

No one has seen him; no one hears of him.

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RACHEL

He might have sent some token of remembrance:
He would have done so, had his heart been true.

MARY

Perhaps he thinks such love as mine is humble.
He will be wiser, should we meet again.
He has been lifted high; the worse his fall.

RACHEL

Not fair to see, and neither kind nor merry!
And yet for him the doors are closed to all, —
Even to your oldest friends.

MARY

Base flatterers!
Friends? I am weary of their foolish faces,
Their scented robes, their empty compliments,
Their idle chatter and their hollow vows.
Judas, I know, was passionate and rough;
There was in him the spirit of a man:
He loved me — or, at least, he made me think so.

RACHEL

Boasters are ever liberal with words.

MARY

He did not boast; he did not cringe and flatter.
His soul with hatred burned against the Roman.

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Haughty and harsh he was — a man of pride:
That I could pardon. But all this must cease.
This my last folly! I'll be no man's dupe.
Fool that I was, to dream of faithful love,
Or think a lover could be true to me!

[*Knocking at door of anteroom.*]

RACHEL

Perhaps he comes at last.

MARY

I will not see him.
No one shall enter. Bar the door to all.

[RACHEL *goes hastily into anteroom. The door is thrown open, and enter, hurriedly,* JOTHAM, JOAB, *and* HARAN. JOTHAM *is boisterous with drink;* JOAB, *foolishly tipsy;* HARAN, *sober. They rudely thrust* RACHEL *aside and come forward, leaving the door open.*]

JOTHAM

[*To* RACHEL.]

Night-owl, begone! We seek the nightingale.
Where is thy beauteous mistress? Where our queen?

RACHEL

[*Opposing him.*]

This is no wine-shop. Brawlers come not here.

[JOTHAM *passes* RACHEL *and approaches* MARY.]

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JOTHAM

Hail, Star of Magdala! Are friends forgotten?
And old friends, too? Do you not know me, Mary?

MARY

I know you well: Jotham, the infamous, —
Whom no man trusteth but to be betrayed,
Nor woman neither. Nothing is forgot.

JOTHAM

[*With ribald laughter.*]

No man forgets Mary of Magdala!
Night after night, tossing in fevered sleep,
I see her image, fair and terrible!
Princess of Israel, I am shrunk with pining.
By Zion's light, I had not dared to come —

MARY

[*Interrupting him.*]

Out of my sight, and never let me see
Thy hateful face again!

HARAN

Fair lady, pardon —

JOTHAM

I say I had not dared to brave thy wrath,
But for this friend of ours, this traveller,
Come from afar to see thee.

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HARAN

And who hopes
To win, at least, forgiveness of intrusion.

MARY

This is my house, and I command you, leave it!

JOTHAM

[*Sitting on couch.*]

Did I not say so, Haran? Fair as Esther,
And proud as Sheba's queen, is our sweet Mary!
How like you beauty rampant in a storm?
Behold her wrath is a consuming fire, —
But only such a one as kisses quench.

[*To* JOAB, *who has come to the table and has seized a wine-cup.*]

Let it alone! Thou hast thy fill already.
That cup, O Joab, is not set for thee,
But for some better man, more fortunate,
Than is the son of Israel's High Priest.

JOAB

[*At table, with drunken gravity.*]

Israel is an empty vine, saith the prophet Hosea. Yea, verily; yet her grapes are sweet, saith Joab, the son of Caiaphas.

[JOAB *pours wine and drinks it.*]

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JOTHAM

Heed him not, Mary! One more draught like that,
And this young cub will lull himself to sleep.
But, for this noble stranger —

HARAN

[*Interrupting.*]

Hush, good friend!
Let us withdraw: we are not welcome here.

JOTHAM

[*Rising.*]

Gaze on him, Mary. Sidon is his home;
Friend of the High Priest of Jerusalem;
Learn'd in the Law and sapient in counsel;
Possessing vineyards, olive trees, and ships.
To-night he boasted of the Sidon women,
Whom he declared the loveliest of the earth.
Then said I unto him, 'Thou knowest nothing:
Thou hast not seen the Star of Magdala!
Thou shalt behold a wonder! I will show her.'

JOAB

[*Incoherently.*]

Let none deal treacher — reacher — ously against the wife of his youth — saith — saith — the prophet Malachi — saith Mary of Magdala — [*To* HARAN] say thou what she is, thou golden ass of Sidon — thou sober sot!

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HARAN

[*Anxiously.*]

We will depart. I humbly crave your pardon,
That in such company I have intruded.

MARY

You are a stranger, sir, and not to blame:
But go with them, if you would have my pardon.

JOTHAM

Banish not Fortune, Mary! Drive not forth
This Prince of Sidon, bearing sacks of gold!
For every kiss of thine he would give pearls!

MARY

Peace, ribald wretch! Shameless and infamous!

JOAB

[*Maudlin.*]

We have not hearkened to his voice, neither have we walked in his paw — law — saith Hab — hab — bek — buk — bak — saith Zephaniah — and the house of Jacob shall be a fire, saith the prophet Obadiah — yet have mercy on thy servant, for he is sore — very sore — afflicted.

[JOAB *falls.*]

MARY

This is an outrage. [*To* RACHEL] Rouse the neighborhood!
Call in the watch!

[RACHEL *goes to door in anteroom.*]

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HARAN

Come, Jotham, come away!

JOTHAM

We are departing, Mary. Fare thee well.
Our hearts are broken, but we'll keep our heads.
But — one cup, fairest! [*He goes to table, pours wine into cup, and drinks.*] Just a parting pledge!

[*To* JOAB, *who is prostrate.*]

Child of the Prophet, dost thou hug the earth?
Watchman of Zion, art thou weary grown?
Up, slothful saint! Up, pious sluggard! Up!

JOAB

Turn me not about; I would be peaceful.

HARAN

Help me to raise him, Jotham! Let's begone!

[HARAN *and* JOTHAM *assist* JOAB *to rise.*]

RACHEL

[*At door.*]

Watch! Watch! Help! Help!

[FLAVIUS, *attended by a Torch-bearer with a lighted torch, appears in open doorway.*]

FLAVIUS

Who calls so loud for help?
In your own house, who is it that affrights you?
[*To* MARY.]

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MARY

[*Pointing to* JOTHAM *and his companions.*]

We do not fear the thing that we despise.

FLAVIUS

[*Contemptuously.*]

And who are these — bold warriors with a woman?

JOTHAM

And who are you? A Roman, by your dress:
But here your privilege will avail you nothing.
You can command us in the public streets,
Not in our homes: we still are masters there.

FLAVIUS

[*Drawing his sword.*]

Your homes? Your proper home is in some kennel.
This is the house of Mary of Magdala:
Leave it — or else my sword shall drive you from it!

HARAN

We have no right here, Jotham; we must yield.

JOTHAM

He draws his sword on men that have no weapons:
A valiant champion, truly!

FLAVIUS

Sots and ruffians!
The flat of the blade would do you too much honor.

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JOAB

[*Maudlin.*]

I warn thee, honest soldier, have a care. I am Joab, son of Caiaphas, the mighty — my father is the High Priest — what saith the prophet Zechariah — deal gently — be not like your fathers — but turn to — to me — sweetest of Marys —

[JOAB *totters, but is supported by* HARAN.]

HARAN

Help me to lead him, Jotham.

JOTHAM

[*To* FLAVIUS.]

Curse upon thee!

[JOTHAM *and* HARAN *assist* JOAB, *and the three go toward door in anteroom, where they pause.*]

And thou, fair serpent, virtuous hypocrite,

[*To* MARY, *with menace.*]

Scorning thy friends, to wile a Roman foe —
Thou shalt not be forgotten.

FLAVIUS

And bear me also in thy memory.
He that hath scorn'd, this night, to shed thy blood,
Is Aulus Flavius, nephew to Pontius Pilate,
The Procurator of Jerusalem.

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JOTHAM

[*Impudently.*]

Tell him he hath great Cæsar for a nephew.

[*Exeunt* JOTHAM, JOAB, *and* HARAN.

[*During the ensuing colloquy between* MARY *and* FLAVIUS, *the Torch-bearer, attendant on* FLAVIUS, *is seen, at intervals, pacing to and fro in the street, in front of the open door.*]

MARY

I thank you, Aulus Flavius, for your help. —
Rachel, bring wine, and take away these cups.

[MARY *sits.* RACHEL *takes the cups that have been used, and goes out, L.*]

FLAVIUS

'Tis I who should be thankful for this hour, —
Blessing the gods that Aulus Flavius
Hath been of service, howsoever humble,
To one so gracious and so beautiful.

[RACHEL *enters, L., while* FLAVIUS *is speaking, and places wine-cups and a flagon of wine on the table. She fills a cup and brings it to* FLAVIUS. *He takes it and drinks.*

Loveliest of all the daughters of thy race!

[*Gives the cup to* RACHEL, *who places it on the table, and then, at a sign of dismissal from* MARY, *goes out, L.*]

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MARY

Again I thank you, Roman; but with this
My hospitality must end. No Roman
Is welcome here.

FLAVIUS

I know it; I have known it many a day;
And if you bid me go, I will depart.

MARY

[*With a sudden interest.*]

How do you know it?

FLAVIUS

Easily enough.—
Against my will, and with a heavy heart,
I left my friends in Rome, — my gay companions,
My free and joyous life, so full of pleasure, —
And hither came, to bleak Jerusalem.
My uncle, Pilate, procurator here,
Wished me to serve the realm, beneath his eye,
And, since I am his heir, I heed his wish.
The change was bitter. In Jerusalem
I found strange people, dark and hostile looks,
Stern duties, and a weary weight of care.—
But — I forget — this land is yours —you love it:
Let me not speak one word to give offence.

MARY

You might have seen, Mary of Magdala
Loves not all things around her, even though
This be her home — [*bitterly*] if any home be hers.

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FLAVIUS

I say I found a sombre people here,
And worship of a hidden Deity
That frowns on Rome and all the Roman gods;
And I grew sad and grim, like all around me.
One twilight hour, walking in these dull streets,
I saw a woman — glorious — like no other
That ever in the world these eyes had seen!
Hebe in grace! Juno in majesty!
Venus herself were not so beautiful.

MARY

Are there such women, then, in Israel?

FLAVIUS

The stately figure moved in loveliness;
Her rich hair floated carelessly, in curls,
From under a light veil; her dark, proud eyes
Looked calmly onward, with a steadfast gaze
That seemed to make a radiance all around her.
Her lips were firmly closed, like one in thought.
She saw not anything — nor man, nor woman —
Though many turned to view her, as she passed, —
Men, with delight; women with furtive scorn.
And so she met me, passed me, and was gone.
My eyes were dazzled and my heart stood still.
When I could speak, I sought to know her name.

MARY

And then you heard —

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FLAVIUS

I heard the name of Mary —
Mary of Magdala: and then I heard — [*He pauses.*]

MARY

Why are you silent? Nothing said of me
Remains to me unknown. . . . And then you heard?

FLAVIUS

Words that were flippant; words that anger'd me.
I'll not repeat them. — Something of the past;
More of the present. All thy life, it seems,
Is given up to luxury and pleasure.
Thou hast had many suitors. All thy nights
Fleet by with wine and music.

MARY

Even so. —
Did any tell you that I loved again?

FLAVIUS

Thy proud eyes tell me now — and tell me much:
And surely thou canst understand the passion
That ever since has flamed within my heart.
Twice have I sought thy door, twice been repulsed.

MARY

'Tis known I have no friendship for the Romans,
The cruel tyrants that enslave my people.

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FLAVIUS

And yet it well might please Judea's daughter
To make a slave of one of those same tyrants.

MARY

That I might do to him as Jael did —
The wife of Heber — unto Sisera?

FLAVIUS

And what did Jael?

MARY

As he lay in slumber
She took a nail and drove it in his temples, —
So that he died.

FLAVIUS

By Jupiter, 'tis well
Your doors were closed to me! But, tell me, lady,
Are deeds like that commended in your creed?
I'll not believe it — though, indeed, I've heard
Your Deity is one of wrath and vengeance.

MARY

I do not any longer seek the Temple —
For they would cast me out, — sinner and wanton!
She must not look for pardon. There's no hope
For her that once hath sinned. "An eye for an eye!"
Yet, if my heart be hardened, 'tis the lust
And craft of man have made me what I am.

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FLAVIUS

And hast thou then been wronged, and hast thou suffered?

MARY

I know not why I should confide in you,
A Roman and a stranger. But, I'm sad,
And something tells me there's a change at hand,
And you, I think, are mingled with my fate.
Wrong was my portion, even from my childhood,
And grief has walked with me for many a day.
When I was scarce sixteen my parents sold me, —
Sold me, in marriage, to a profligate,
A creature old in years, older in vice,
Evil in all things, bestial and corrupt;
But he had wealth, and wealth, with them, was all!
Vainly I supplicated, vainly wept, —
Saying "I'll be a servant," "I will beg,"
"But sell me not to slavery and shame."

FLAVIUS

Thy lot was hard indeed. What then befell?

MARY

Three years I bore it, loathing life itself.
Then I could bear no more. I found a friend
Who had compassion on my misery.
We fled by night, here, to Jerusalem.
With him I lived, concealed — until, at last —

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FLAVIUS

He died? And you were friendless?

MARY

Worse than that!
When he had spent the money that I brought,
He left me, helpless and in poverty.
Then first I learned the wisdom of our King —
That everything on earth is vanity.
The tenderness of parents for their children, —
That which they call the holiest of feelings, —
The love of man for woman, — which they call
The mightiest, —
They are as stubble in a raging flame,
When set against the lust and treachery
Of miserable man!
One thing alone is real, that I have found, —
Even because the lightest of all things,
The frailest and the first to pass away.
And yet 'tis potent to renew itself,
Even as it dies.

FLAVIUS

The truest thing, because the most untrue?

MARY

[*With bitter levity.*]

Pleasure! Unthinking and unheeding pleasure!
Careless, free-hearted mirth, that lives to-day,
And takes no heed of any day but this!

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The reckless will to seize the instant joy;
Only to feed the hunger of our senses;
Only to revel in the bliss of youth.

FLAVIUS

And thou art right — for love is happiness,
And happiness knows nothing but itself.

MARY

[*With bitterness.*]

What word is that? I've thought of happiness.
It would be freedom from these wild desires,
This strife between the senses and the soul,
This self-contempt, this sinking at the heart
With secret dread. It would be rest and peace.
Such blesséd comfort never will be mine:
Frenzy of mirth is all that's left for me.
Nothing in life is sacred, nothing true.

FLAVIUS

But is there no relief in friendship, Mary?
And hast thou never had even one true friend?

MARY

One friend I had, and him I dearly prized.
'Twas not a common pleasure that he craved.
His mind was full of high and noble thoughts.
Ay! and he hated Romans, and had died
Sooner than bend the knee, even to Cæsar!

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For him I closed my doors against the world:
For him I gave up all. He did not care.
He, too, has left me. I can answer you:
Friendship is also vain.

FLAVIUS

Then take my counsel and turn back to love!
From the first moment when I saw thy face
My heart has worshipped thee.
Thou hast not learned yet how a Roman loves:
Learn it of me.

MARY

[FLAVIUS *rises.*]

Never!
No fellowship can any Roman have
With Mary of Magdala! . . . Thou hast been kind,
And something in thee — in thy face or voice —
Hath made me trust thee. . . .
Now go thy ways,
And all the goodness of thy gods go with thee!

[JUDAS *appears in the doorway at the back, C., visible in the light of the torch. He pauses for a moment and looks into the room; then he enters and comes quickly forward.*]

JUDAS

[*To* MARY.]

A Roman in this house! Hast thou forgotten?

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MARY

[*Coldly.*]

Why should I not forget? Thou hast given me time.

FLAVIUS

[*Satirically.*]

Is this, then, lady, thy heroic friend,
Whose haughty spirit bends not to the Cæsar?

JUDAS

Insolent Roman! Leave this house at once,
Or —

FLAVIUS

[*Contemptuously regarding* JUDAS.]

Am I then in present peril, sir?

JUDAS

Thou hast a sword, and I am weaponless;
But what of that? These hands shall conquer thee.

FLAVIUS

Judas of Kerioth — not Maccabæus!
Thou art no conqueror, Judas.

[JUDAS *rushes toward* FLAVIUS. MARY *quickly interposes.*]

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MARY

Peace! I command you! Let there be no brawling
In my abode! . . . Judas, this brave young soldier
Stood between me and insult — and I thank him.

[*To* FLAVIUS.]

How dost thou know him, Flavius?

FLAVIUS

I seem to know him somewhat better, lady,
Even than thou dost, — calling him thy friend.
Near to my dwelling lives an honest Jew,
Named Simon, and his garden, next to mine,
Is parted only by a narrow lane.
Walking among my roses, I can see him,
With his companions. Common men, they seem —
Men with coarse garments; one of them a preacher, —
But him they honor, as he were a prince.
I have been told he comes from Galilee.
One of my menials, following in his train,
Hath told me this. Another of his people,
A man of dark and lowering countenance, —
A falcon among doves, — she says, is Judas,
Judas of Kerioth.

MARY

Here — all this time —
Here, in the city, and hath kept himself
Concealed from me.

[JUDAS *turns away, disturbed, but sullen and defiant.*]

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FLAVIUS

This is no hawk: this fowl is of the barnyard.
Of those tame followers Judas is the tamest.
He was a money-changer, at the Temple;
One day this preacher, out of Galilee,
Came, with a whip, and set upon the hucksters,
And scourged them from the Temple to the street.
Then was the stall of Judas overturned,
And all his silver scattered on the ground,
Where beggars scrambled for it.

MARY

[*To* JUDAS.]

Is this true?

FLAVIUS

Your doughty friend is little like to tell
How meekly he endured this ignominy;
How at the heels of his despoiler
He slunk and cowered, following, like a dog,
The man who beat and robb'd him. Do you marvel
That I despise his threats, and will not go,
At any bidding, from this place, but thine?

MARY

[*To* FLAVIUS.]

And now, once more, Flavius, I bid thee go. —

[*To* JUDAS.]

Thou hearest, Judas, what is said of thee.

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FLAVIUS

[*As he goes toward door, C.*]

Remember, Mary, all that I have said.
The heart of Flavius is not one that changes.
As to this Judas,—
If thou would'st see the preacher and his clan,
Visit my dwelling. Any time be thine.
Come when thou wilt. Thou shalt behold the brethren,
And meek and lowly Judas in among them;
And every honor shall attend upon thee.
And so, Farewell!

[*Exit* FLAVIUS, *through door at back, meeting his Torch-bearer, who attends him. After they have vanished, enter* RACHEL, *L. She goes to door at back, and closes it. Then she glances at* MARY *and* JUDAS, *and goes out, L.* MARY *sits on couch, R.* JUDAS *looks around uneasily, glancing at* MARY. *Pause. The scene slightly darkens. Low and solemn music, at distance.*]

JUDAS

Why dost thou bend thy looks upon the ground?
Is this thy greeting, Mary, to thy lover?

MARY

It always was my habit to look up,
Whene'er I looked on Judas. Now, degraded,
I must look for him in the dust.

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JUDAS

Degraded?
Is it disgrace to tend upon a hero?
Had you but seen his face, when he despoil'd me,
There — at the Temple gate — you would have known,
Have comprehended, all!
So looks the hunter, striking down the lion!
I had no will, except to follow him;
To leave my home, my calling, even you,
My best belovéd!
His eyes compelled me and his power subdued;
His glory shrivelled all my spirit up,
And changed me in an instant: what I was
Became as nothing, underneath the glance
That made me what I am — his worshipper!

MARY

Why not have told me, Judas?

JUDAS

[*Moodily.*]

All is not clear: a cloud is on my mind.
Those gentle souls, those humble followers,
Are not like me! No fire of stately race
Burns in their veins, to think on Israel's fate —
Submission, degradation, slavery!
And yet he heeds me even less than them.
Still he delays to strike, and still I rage
To lift our banner and to save our people.
Am I deceived? . . . Idolatry and shame,
Belief and doubt — they struggle in my soul,

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And this vain anguish makes a living hell,
Where once there was a heaven of content
With love and thee.

MARY

[*Thoughtfully, half aside.*]

I must behold him: I must know this man,
Who hath such power both to bless and curse.

JUDAS

Be warned by me! The radiance of thy beauty
Would turn to darkness in his heavenly gaze.
Woman is naught to him. If thou should'st see him,
The blight of self-contempt would fall upon thee;
Scorn of the past and terror of the future;
The misery of infinite desire,
Forever longing and forever baffled.
Let us forget him, and be happy, Mary.
We are together, Mary: thou art fair:
And all my soul knows now is, that I love thee.

MARY

'Tis a long time since thou hast thought of love:
A weary time since thou hast turned to me.

JUDAS

I have been absent from Jerusalem,
Following the prophet, where, in many places,
He taught the people. But I tell thee, Mary,
In all my wanderings, still my secret thoughts
Were all of thee!

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Toiling, by day, along the dusty roads,
Resting, by night, beneath the pitiless stars,
Still, in despair, my heart has turned to thee,
With all the longing passion of this hour.
Thou, who hast taught me what it is to love
And to be loved, —
Thy heart must surely tell thee what I suffer
When I am parted from thee, and alone!
Whichever way I turn I see thy face;
In every wand'ring wind I hear thy voice;
Thy kisses seem to burn upon my lips.
O Mary, life has been one wild desire
To feel thy arms around me once again!
And now, at last, when I have broke the chain
That bound me to the prophet; now, at last,
When I have sought thee, Mary, nevermore
To live without thee, all thy love is frozen!
But I will melt this ice. Without thee, Mary,
I cannot live!

MARY

[*Bitterly.*]

No more of this pretence!
Hast thou once named me to that holy man?
Hast thou once told him of a friend of thine,
Long since cast out, despis'd, condemn'd, and scorn'd
By all good men and women?

JUDAS

[*Defiantly.*]

Why should I speak of thee? Is he our judge?
Why should he know what this night's veil will cover?

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MARY

His gaze might pierce the veil!
And he might drive thee from his presence, Judas,
When he should know —

JUDAS

Mary!

MARY

Do not come near me. Bitter thoughts are mine, —

[MARY *rises.*]

Seeing thee what thou art. My love is dead.
Obey thy Master! Go! And from this hour
Let Mary be forgotten!

JUDAS

I thought to find my refuge in those arms. —
What hath so changed thee?

MARY

Our thoughts range far, and turn with every breeze.

JUDAS

So be it; I will go: but I remember!
Thy heart was mine? Thou hast no other hope.
And one day thou wilt turn again to me,
Seeking the love that thou dost banish now.

[*Exit* JUDAS, *rapidly, C. Pause. Silence.* MARY *stands, absorbed in thought.*]

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MARY

Rachel!

[*Enter* RACHEL, *L.*]

To-morrow go, inquire, and bring me word
Where dwells this Roman who was here but now.

RACHEL

The Roman, Flavius! Lady, can it be
That you will visit him?

[*Pause.* MARY *makes no answer, but stands motionless.* RACHEL *goes out, L. Pause.*]

MARY

[*Scornfully repeating the words of* JUDAS.]

'His eyes compelled me and his power subdued;
His glory shrivelled all my spirit up,
And changed me in an instant: what I was
Became as nothing, underneath the glance
That made me what I am — his worshipper!' . . .
I must behold this man of mystery.

CURTAIN.

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ACT II

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ACT II

SCENE: A room in the house of FLAVIUS

At back a wide arcade, through which a spacious garden is visible. The trees and shrubbery must be Oriental,—palms, olives, figs, cypress, etc. Platform at base of arcade, accessible by steps. Roman furniture, stately but simple. A bust of Augustus Cæsar, R., and a bust of Tiberius, L., each on a column. Door L. and door R., each draped with a curtain. Down stage, R., a table, on which are parchment scrolls and other writing materials; also the sword of FLAVIUS. *Chair at table. Several other chairs, conveniently disposed.* FLAVIUS *and* QUINTUS *are discovered.* QUINTUS *is seated at table, writing.* FLAVIUS *is pacing the floor and dictating letter.*

FLAVIUS

[*Dictating.*]

Thou knowest, my Fulvia, that I honor each wish of thine as a celestial command; but how am I to write merry letters when my soul is in gloom? I must play the hypocrite, singing glad songs, with a heart full of sorrow. Rather let my songs be mournful, like those poor Ovid, in his banishment, sent back to Rome, for then they will tell the truth. Much of my occupation is to write the letters that my uncle, Pontius Pilate, sends to Cæsar. As for the women, of whom thou art curious, I have seen but one that

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Fulvia might deign to heed. Yet be not jealous, for she, like all the women of Jerusalem, is scornful of the Romans.

[*Enter, L.*, MACRO.]

Speak, fellow!

MACRO

Thy servant, Miriam, the Hebrew woman,
Would beg of thee.

FLAVIUS

Admit her.

[*Exit* MACRO, *L.* QUINTUS *gives scroll to* FLAVIUS.]

'Thy faithful Aulus.'

[*Glancing at scroll.*]

Ay, that will do.

[*Fastens the scroll. Enter* MIRIAM, *L.*]

Give this to Sextus. Let it go to Rome,
By the first messenger.

[QUINTUS *takes the scroll and goes out, L.* MIRIAM *kneels before* FLAVIUS *and tries to carry the hem of his toga to her lips.*]

FLAVIUS

Rise, Miriam. What would you ask of me?

MIRIAM

Heaven grant thee many years!
Thou art just and kind.

[*She rises.*]

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FLAVIUS

What hast thou to complain of, in my service?

MIRIAM

Far be it from me ever to complain.
Thou art most kind. Thy servants do not mock me,
Even when I leave their table, as commanded
By Israel's law. Yet do I beg of thee
To be released from service.

FLAVIUS

And hast thou found a better service, Miriam?
More richly paid? Speak freely. I'll not hold thee,
At any disadvantage.

MIRIAM

The holy man, the Nazarene, who comes
To teach the people, in thy neighbor's garden —

FLAVIUS

Well, what of him?
Hath he a service for thee?

MIRIAM

Often thou hast permitted me to hear him.
They say he will be king in Israel,
Blessing the poor and making all men happy.
I do not understand — but, 'tis new life
To hear his voice and to see his face.
And now he has done so great a thing for me, —
So wonderful —

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FLAVIUS

Be brief. Speak on, and plainly.

MIRIAM

I have a son. Sickly he was, from birth;
Walking with crutches. Yesterday the prophet
Laid hands upon him, saying, 'Rise and walk;'
And in that very moment was he healed,
Throwing away his crutches.
And he rushed hither, wild with joy, to tell me.

FLAVIUS

[*Playfully.*]

Good tidings! And a wondrous cure, indeed! —
But what dost thou desire for thyself?

MIRIAM

[*Kneeling.*]

To leave all worldly service, for his sake!
By day and night to serve but only him.
That is my prayer.

FLAVIUS

Thy prayer is granted; thou art free to go.

MIRIAM

[*Rising.*]

Blessing upon thee!
Morning and evening shall the prayers of Miriam
Be said, for her kind lord.

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FLAVIUS

So fare thee well.
Quintus shall give thee money.

[*Exit* MIRIAM, *L.*]

FLAVIUS

[*Alone. Playfully.*]

Now might I cousel my grim uncle, Pilate,
To seek, from this same wonder-working prophet,
The healing of his gout.

[*Enter* MACRO, *L.*]

Well: who comes now?

MACRO

A lady, sir, who says she is expected.

FLAVIUS

Bid her enter.

[*Exit* MACRO, *L.*]

Mary of Magdala!

[*Facetiously.*]

O, curiosity!
Thou first and ever fatal conqueror,
That women ne'er resisted!

[*Enter* MARY, *L., gorgeously attired. She is ushered by* QUINTUS, *and is attended by* RACHEL *and followed by several female slaves.* FLAVIUS *advances toward* MARY.]

I am more honored than all words could say.

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MARY

I come to see the wonder-working prophet.
Perhaps my coming is inopportune;
But, curiosity is woman's plague,
And — thou wert gracious.

[*Crosses R.*]

FLAVIUS

Pray be seated, lady.
The people have not come to Simon's garden.
'Tis early yet.

[RACHEL *and other attendants take places at back. Enter, R. and L., several slaves, directed by* MACRO, *bringing wine and fruit. Exit* MACRO.]

Flavius were happy, could he dare to think
That grace and beauty, honoring his poor house,
Had sought his humble dwelling with, perhaps,
One little thought of kindness for himself.

MARY

A gentle flattery never comes amiss —
Or so men think — to please a woman's ear.
Lord Flavius seems an adept in this art,
And words are turned to flowers when he speaks them.

[*Crosses to L.*]

FLAVIUS

Truth is not flattery; Flavius only says
It would be sweet to live in Mary's thought,

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As something worth a smile — or, better still,
The good remembrance of a passing sigh.

MARY

Mary, perhaps, has cause enough to sigh;
But when she thinks of Flavius, she recalls
Kindness and courtesy, protective care,
And unobtrusive homage. Be assur'd
Her thoughts of him are kind.
We understand each other, and are friends.

FLAVIUS

Friends, to the last! A dearer wish have I,
But must not speak it yet — at least not here.
I wonder, now, if you can read the heart?

MARY

The heart of man is like an open book,
When something he imagines beautiful —
Some image that he dotes on, in his fancy —
Has, for a while, enthrall'd him. Close it, Flavius!
The word I may have read there is forgotten;
It must not be remembered.

FLAVIUS

Be it so.

[*Enter Egyptian Dancers, L.*]

Lady, by your leave,
Our revel is at hand.

[*Business. Dance, etc.*]

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MARY

The sweetest music seems not always sweet,
Save when the mind is free.

FLAVIUS

[*Rising.*]

Break off the music!

[*Exeunt Dancers.* *Enter* MACRO.

More visitors? Who is it now that comes?

MACRO

The High Priest, Caiaphas, would see Lord Flavius.

FLAVIUS

[*To* MARY.]

Lady, by your leave.

[MARY *bows.*]

[*To* MACRO.]

Conduct him hither.

[*Exit* MACRO, *L.*]

[*Aside.*]

Strange that the High Priest of Jerusalem —
Should visit my poor dwelling!

[*Enter L.*, CAIAPHAS, *attended by* GAMALIEL *and other Priests.* MARY *rises.*]

FLAVIUS

Hail, venerable man!
What happy fortune brings this honor to me?

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CAIAPHAS

A matter of great import, Aulus Flavius.

FLAVIUS

Matters of import are for Pilate's ear,
Rather than mine. He is the governor.

CAIAPHAS

The noble Pilate hath, these many days,
Been deaf to me, about this business:
He will not listen: so I come to thee,
That thou may'st know the danger, and may'st warn him. —
But, pardon me; I'll seek another time,
When we are private.

[*A pause.* CAIAPHAS *looks attentively at* MARY.]

Meanwhile, Lord Flavius, —
If I may crave so great a privilege, —
Could I but say a word, before I go,
Here, to this lady, and to her alone,
It would advantage her — perhaps avert
Some peril.
Her face and name are not unknown to me.

FLAVIUS

If she be pleased to hear you.

[*He looks at* MARY, *with inquiry of manner, and she assents by a slight sign.*]

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Be it so.
Then I will leave you — knowing you are mindful
The lady is the guest of Aulus Flavius.

[CAIAPHAS *bows.* MARY, *by a sign, dismisses her followers.* *Exit* FLAVIUS, *into garden, C., followed by* RACHEL *and the other attendants of* MARY. CAIAPHAS *gives a signal of dismissal to* GAMALIEL *and the other attendant Priests, and they go out, L.* CAIAPHAS *and* MARY *are alone.*]

CAIAPHAS

'Tis long since I have looked upon thy face.
Thou dost not seek the Temple any more, —
Fearing to hear the voice of rebuke;
As well thou may'st.

MARY

I am not fond of words.
Thy voice is mostly heard in that high place:
There's little room for any other sound.

CAIAPHAS

Dost thou rebel? Remember, I can punish.

MARY

And that same voice is more than common sweet!
No wonder Caiaphas delights to hear it.

CAIAPHAS

Woman, thy life is open; all thy shame
Is seen and known. I long have noted thee.

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MARY

Good men take special care to notice vice,
When vice is clothed with beauty.
No doubt it is solicitude for woman.

CAIAPHAS

Weakness hath ever need of strength, to shield it.

MARY

Your good King David had an eye to that,
In fair Bathsheba's time.

CAIAPHAS

Thou railest, woman! Thou hast broken through
The sacred bond of wedlock; left thy husband;
Trodden the downward path of sin and shame.
Thy life is forfeit, by the Law of Moses:
Art thou so stolid, in thy wickedness,
That thou art dead to fear?

MARY

What should I fear from such a holy man
As our great Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS

I could denounce thee:
False to thy race and recreant to thy faith!
Vile minion of this Roman profligate!

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MARY

He bears the signet, and he hath the ear,
Of Pontius Pilate: he's a useful man.

CAIAPHAS

Audacious wanton! In the open day,
I find thee feasting with the proud oppressor,
Bearing thy part in his lascivious orgy —
Exultant and defiant in thy shame.

MARY

I like a politician in my train.
All puppets dance, when Beauty pulls the string.

CAIAPHAS

Woman, beware! The Council hath observed thee, —
Even the Sanhedrim, — and, at a word,
Thy course is run. Beware, lest I should speak it.

MARY

There are good friends of mine in that same Council.
Gray hairs and virtue are not always kin.
I neither fear thee, nor thy Council, Priest!

CAIAPHAS

Mary of Magdala, the day will come
When, from those eyes, now sparkling with disdain,
The light will fade, and from those cheeks the roses
Will shrink and wither. I might speak of this;

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Might warn thee of the coming on of time,
When homage will be changed to cold contempt,
And words of love be never whispered more.
But this would be reproof. Let it alone.
My words shall be of comfort — not of censure.
Over thy piteous past I'll throw a veil,
If only thou dost heed me in the present.

MARY

[*Ironically.*]

I am not very like to pass unheeded
So potent and so wise a man as Caiaphas.

CAIAPHAS

Delilah sav'd her people: Judith's hand
Smote the Assyrian and destroy'd him.

MARY

I know not that I understand the drift
Of this strange indirection.

CAIAPHAS

Thou art used
To fire the fancy of confiding men.
Thy soft enchantment hath beguiled this Roman.
Thou say'st, thyself, he hath the ear of Pilate,
The Procurator here.

MARY

Well, what of that?

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CAIAPHAS

Thou know'st, perchance, the wand'ring Nazarene,
The prophet of sedition, who defies
The Priesthood of the Temple and the Law?

MARY

I've heard there is a Nazarene, who preaches.
What's that to me? I have not seen the man:
I do not know him, even by a name.

CAIAPHAS

This sacrilegious man, this Nazarene.
Hath power upon the foolish multitude,
And many people are misled by him:
Not through his wisdom, — for he is not wise;
But, partly, that he is a charlatan,
Deceiving them with tricks, called miracles;
And much because of idle promises,
To raise the lowly, when he shall be crown'd
As Israel's king. Now Pilate might destroy him,
And ought to do so; but he will not listen.
Therefore I come to Flavius, whom he loves,
And whose persuasion, earnestly employ'd,
Would set the lethal sword of law in motion,
And sweep this dangerous dreamer from our path.

MARY

Mary of Magdala hath naught to do
With Pontius Pilate.

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CAIAPHAS

[*Significantly.*]

Mary of Magdala
Hath everything to do with Aulus Flavius.

MARY

This was thy purpose then, High Priest of lies!
To profit by a woman's wanton lure, —
Plunging her deeper in the infamy
That late thou didst rebuke. Thou hypocrite!
I am to take a Roman paramour,
And, by that means, bend Pontius to thy will, —
Launching, upon the head of innocence,
Anguish and death, to feed thy bigotry
And glut thy priestly vengeance! Infamous!
I see thee, now, the loathsome thing thou art —
Unscrupulous, vindictive, and corrupt!
My curse upon thee!
And curséd be thy whole pernicious race!
They are all false! all bestial! villains all!
Intent on greed, and lust, and violence!
O if there be some deadly Power that hears
A woman's supplication, hear me now!
Deliver them, O Fiend, into my hands!
I will not spare one living soul of all
That come within my reach!
Sin shall be still my choice! and still my joy
Shall be to gloat upon their hopeless ruin,
And riot on the wages of their shame!

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[MARY *and* CAIAPHAS *stand confronting each other. Enter, quickly,* FLAVIUS, *from garden, C.*]

FLAVIUS

Delay no longer, lady!
The prophet has gone forth into the garden.
Many are with him. You can see him there,
And hear his voice. — Why dost thou stare?
Is then thy purpose changed?

[*Exit* MARY, *quickly, to garden, C.*]

[*To* CAIAPHAS.]

What hast thou said?
I have not seen her thus, at any time.
Some dark and deadly thought broods in her mind.

CAIAPHAS

The mind of woman is a shallow thing;
I do not care to search it.

FLAVIUS

Yet evermore the feeble race of man
Is ruled by woman.
Women and priests divide the spoils of empire.
He is not wise who scorns the thoughts of women.
But that is nothing. Thou hast wounded her.
You good men are too ready with reproof.

CAIAPHAS

The High Priest of Jerusalem may speak,
In needful admonition, when he will.
All places are as temples for the truth.

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FLAVIUS

She is my guest. Not even by a word
Shall harm befall her. Where a Roman dwells
Is Roman soil.
'Twere well you do not trespass on my patience.

CAIAPHAS

The yoke is laid upon us; but the Lord
Hath his own time.

FLAVIUS

So hath Tiberius Cæsar:
And it may very suddenly arrive,
For such as brave his power. —
No more of this.
You spoke, but now, of certain business;
And, since my duty is to serve the State,
I'll listen to it.

[FLAVIUS *indicates a seat for* CAIAPHAS, *and both sit.*]

CAIAPHAS

Then, briefly, this it is.
The Nazarene, —
Often heard preaching in thy neighbor's garden,
Deceives the people and stirs up sedition.
Crowds follow him. The throng increases daily.
He should be seized. The city's peace is threatened.

FLAVIUS

Because a credulous and silly mob
Follows a dreamer? — I have lived in Rome,

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Where alien priests, Chaldeans and the like,
Preach every day, and are forever prating.
Let him dream on, still talking in his dreams!
So that the chief divinity of Rome —
Tiberius Cæsar —
Be not assail'd, nor any way disturb'd,
His talk is harmless.

CAIAPHAS

We also bow to Rome's great Emperor;
But our devotion owns a mightier power.
We cannot any longer tamely bear
That one of our own people should defy
The covenants of Israel, and the Law.

FLAVIUS

[*Satirically.*]

And is it, then, against your Jewish law,
To heal the sick? I've heard this wondrous man
Can heal the sick, and also raise the dead.

CAIAPHAS

I came not here to speak of sacred things,
For flippant scorn to mock at.
Be warned! This peril to Jerusalem
Is equally a deadly threat to Rome.

FLAVIUS

Rome hath no fear of your poor Nazarene.
Thou hast not seen him, Caiaphas, as I have.

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He's not contentious. Mostly he has visions;
And 'tis of them he speaks:
Mansions in clouds, and other vapory matter.
His face is mild; there is no peril in it.
Your fears, Lord Caiaphas, are very idle.

CAIAPHAS

The face of man is often but a mask.
The snake in Paradise was fair to see.
To us, young soldier,
I say this Galilean is a menace —
An insult to our faith and to our Law;
A danger to the State, and, if not checked,
The power of Rome itself will tremble for it.

FLAVIUS

Rome's eagles overshadow all the world.

CAIAPHAS

Till the Most High shall check their flight at last.

FLAVIUS

It may be so; it is not wise to say so.
But wherein does this harmless Nazarene
Disturb your peace or menace your religion?

CAIAPHAS

He hath proclaimed he will destroy our Temple,
And in three days rebuild it, and be crown'd, —
Ay, crown'd therein, — the King of Israel!

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FLAVIUS

Lord Caiaphas,
You are a learnéd man and a wise priest;
But, this time, sure, your wisdom is asleep.
If this same preacher be indeed your foe,
Able and ripe for mischief, should not Rome,
In common policy and common sense,
Sustain his cause against you?
The Jews are still the secret foes of Rome:
They would be open foes, had they the power.
They do not lack the courage nor the will.
Rome will be friends with every enemy
That strikes at you.
I marvel you could reason otherwise.

[*He rises.*]

Pilate, be sure, will give you no protection:
Rome will not be your watchman nor your guard.

CAIAPHAS

[*Rising.*]

'Pride goeth before destruction.'
The Lord, who reigneth, will cast down the mighty.
He will consume and utterly destroy
All them that break his Law.

FLAVIUS

[*Playfully.*]

So I have heard.

[*Hoarse murmurs outside. A tumult, gradually increasing.* MIRIAM *rushes in, from garden, C.*]

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MIRIAM

Save the poor woman! Help her, and save her!

FLAVIUS

What woman?

MIRIAM

They threaten! They will kill her!

[*Clamor increases.*]

FLAVIUS

What woman, I say?

MIRIAM

She came out from your garden: she press'd near,
And stood before the Master: then a voice
Cried out, in fury, 'The adulteress—
Mary of Magdala. Stone her! Stone her!'

FLAVIUS

[*Snatching up his sword.*]

Madmen! Would they dare?

[*Tumult outside.*]

Caiaphas, speak thou to the multitude!

CAIAPHAS

She hath deserved her doom, and must abide it.

FLAVIUS

Then I will meet them!

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[FLAVIUS *rushes toward garden, meeting a great throng.* MARY *rushes forward, C.* JUDAS, *striving to shield her, comes next, and then a mob of furious men and women, intent upon killing* MARY, *presses in from the garden, with great and continual clamor.* RACHEL *is among the rabble, trying to reach her mistress.*]

VOICES

Down with the wanton! Down with her! Stone her to death!

JUDAS

Back! Touch her not!

FLAVIUS

Ha! Macro! Quintus! Sextus! What rabble's this?

MANY VOICES

[*These words distributed among them.*]

He is her lover! He would protect the wanton! Out with her to the street! Let her die! Stone her to death! It is the Law of Moses! Stone her to death!

JUDAS

No hand shall touch her!

[*Continued and tremendous clamor. The mob wildly agitated. Picture.* FLAVIUS, *with drawn sword, dominating the scene.*]

FLAVIUS

This woman is my guest: I will protect her.

[*Renewed shouts.* SIMON *rushes forward, C.*]

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SIMON

Silence! Back, all of you! Silence, I say!

[*The mob become suddenly silent.*]

Hear what the Master even now hath said:
'HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM CAST THE FIRST STONE!'

[*The multitude is quelled. All bow their heads. Momentary silence. Picture.*]

RACHEL

[*To Mary.*]

Come away!

MARY

[*In delirium of dread.*]

There! There! Do you not see them?
Those awful eyes! They burn into my soul!
Their light of doom illumines all the world.
Ah, save me! Save me! Save me from those eyes!

QUICK CURTAIN

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ACT III

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ACT III

SCENE: A square in Jerusalem, with practicable streets opening from it

On R. the front of the house of the High Priest. On L. the porch of the house of SIMON. *A well in C. at back. A throng of people discovered in front of* SIMON'S *house.*

[*Enter* JOAB *and* HARAN, *R.*]

JOAB

[*Indicating throng of people around* SIMON'S *house.*]

There they stand, Haran; fools and madmen all —
Waiting to see their new King of the Jews.

HARAN

Madmen and fools sometimes speak truth, good Joab.

JOAB

I saw this preacher, at the Passover;
The people crowded round him, waving palms:
But I saw nothing strange about the man.
He's very like the customary rabbi.
There was, indeed, a fire in his eyes,
As of a fever.

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HARAN

I should like to see him.

JOAB

He talks in parables, and tells odd tales.
His followers are mostly fishermen.
They neither read nor write.
Our priests have question'd him, but all in vain.
Love, he declares, is higher than all law,
And everybody must be 'born again.'

HARAN

I know you laugh at me; but, truly, now,
I'd like to say, in Sidon, that I've seen him, —
This famous prophet of Jerusalem.

JOAB

My father is most furious against him;
Calls him 'Judea's pest,' and 'foe of heaven.'
I cannot help you here.
For my part, I should let the firebrand die, —
Smoulder to ashes. Caiaphas is too eager.
But here comes Jotham.

[*Enter* JOTHAM, *L.*]

Whither away, good lad?

JOTHAM

The way to you.
Our host, by Zion's gate, hath wine from Samos.
If sprightly Hester come to wait on us,

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Haran will think that Paradise has open'd.
What say'st thou, Haran? Wilt thou drink? Wilt quaff?

JOAB

Haran is looking for another heaven —
There — with the cobblers and the fishermen.

HARAN

I only said that I should like to see him —
This Galilean, whom your people follow.
You know I am a stranger in your city;
And, to the traveller, every sight is novel.

JOTHAM

The preacher? He's indeed a novelty!
Thy faring might be even worse, with him,
Than 'twas with Magdalen. He scorns the rich.
Now if, perchance, thou wert a raggéd beggar —

HARAN

[*Interrupting.*]

I hear the Magdalen was saved from stoning, —
Because she went before him, clad in gold, —
Saved from the wrath of his mad followers,
Who would have slain her.

[*The door of* SIMON'S *house is opened and* SIMON *enters, L., pausing on the threshold.*]

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JOAB

That is Simon: a sane man once, and pious;
Now he's crazed, like all the rest.
Come! Let's away!

SIMON

[*Addressing the people.*]

Your presence, friends, is welcome, but the house
Is full of people, and our honored Master,
Who is within — and sends his blessing to you —
Is very weary, and hath need of rest.
I know you love him, and, because you love him,
Will spare his strength. Come to this place to-morrow,
And you shall see him.

[*Murmurs. The crowd disperses and slowly straggles off, several ways.* HARAN *approaches* SIMON.]

HARAN

I am a stranger and a traveller, sir,
From Sidon;
And must depart, to-morrow, for that place.
My heart is eager for the sight of him,
This holy man;
And, should you fail me, I may never see him,
Good Simon, let me enter. I'll not trouble him,
Be sure, with idle questions.

[SIMON *closes the door and comes down to* HARAN.]

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SIMON

The crowd within is dense. Come to my garden.
Since thy need is urgent, I'll not deny thee.
See him, thou shalt. But do not speak to him.
He hath been very strange to us, of late:
He sits in silence, and he muses much;
And he is sorrowful. Come, sir, follow me.

[*Exit* SIMON, *L. U. E., followed by* HARAN.]

JOTHAM

[*To* JOAB.]

I do not understand this guest of thine:
But, folly's a disease and easily caught,
And still it spreads.
Come, Joab: let us go where Hester waits,
And taste the wine of Samos.

JOAB

[*Looking off R.*]

Very gladly!
But — who comes yonder? Is it? Can it be?
By all the Prophets, yes! The Magdalen!
Close veil'd in black; but that imperial figure
No man that ever saw could e'er mistake.
And, see! her old gray shadow follows her.

JOTHAM

They say he worketh wonders: that, indeed,
Would be a wonder much beyond all wonders.

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[*Enter* MARY, *R., followed by* RACHEL. MARY *is dressed in black, and partly veiled. She carries a little box.* JOTHAM *advances to meet her, obstructing the way.*]

JOTHAM

A greeting to the beauteous Magdalen!
Art thou in love with shards and pebbles, Mary?
Art thou enamor'd of loose masonry?
Wilt thou again abide the pious mob?

JOAB

[*In mockery.*]

Nay, Jotham! Mark you not her garb of woe?
She will not enter.
She will but cast her body on the ground,
For the great King to tread on.

JOTHAM

The proudest nobles of Jerusalem
Were all too lowly for thee, Mistress Mary!
Yet is thy star ascendant, glorious one!
Thou may'st be consort to a king of rags,
And rule his beggars.

JOAB

For, thus saith the prophet Ezekiel:
'Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty: thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground.'

[MARY *stands motionless and silent, gazing toward the house of* SIMON.]

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RACHEL

So hath it ever been with curs and cowards!
Cringing and fawning, when her state was royal,
Prone at her feet, and suppliant for a smile,
You begg'd her favor! Yet her sorrow now
Can move you not at all.
Evil and base! Be sham'd, and ask her pardon!
Thou, above all, thou son of the High Priest,
Repent in time!

JOTHAM

Hast thou no answer for this homily?
No scrap of prophecy to stop the mouth
Of this old witch?

JOAB

[*Startled and abashed.*]

'He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life.'
How pale she is!
I'm sorry for thee, Mary.

JOTHAM

Her cheeks will bloom again when lovers kiss.
She goes to coronation. Come away!

[*Exeunt* JOTHAM *and* JOAB, *L.*]

RACHEL

Lady, once more be warn'd! Stay from this house!
Do not again venture thy precious life.

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MARY

I do the thing I must.

RACHEL

And thy young life will be a sacrifice.

MARY

My life is nothing. All I live for now
Is service unto him.
He is my judge, my Master, and my refuge.
Let me go!
If I may never see his face again,
My soul will die within me!

RACHEL

Then wait till all the multitude is gone.
Seek him when he's alone.

MARY

They all have known me in my pomp and pride:
They all shall see me in my deep contrition.
Perchance he'll speak to me.
O Rachel, he is sacred, wonderful,
And I a creature grovelling in the dust,
Stain'd with my shame and burden'd with my sin,
Unworthy to approach him.
Yet must I go.
But, if thou fear'st his followers, stay thou here:
It will not be for long.

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RACHEL

Even though this portal were the gate of death,
I would not leave thee, lady.

[*Enter* MIRIAM, *from house of* SIMON, *L., bearing a pitcher. She goes toward well, C.*]

MIRIAM

[*Seeing* MARY.]

Thou here!

MARY

I come to thank him — not to trouble him.
I do not think that any heart but mine
Can know what comfort it would be to see him.

MIRIAM

No one can enter. Simon hath forbid.
And yet, perhaps, it would not please the Master,
That thou should'st be denied. A moment wait.
When I go in, thou may'st slip in with me.

[MIRIAM *goes to well and fills pitcher with water.* CAIAPHAS *and* GAMALIEL *appear in street, up stage at R., slowly approaching.* MIRIAM *goes into* SIMON'S *house, L., bearing pitcher, and* MARY *and* RACHEL *follow her and the door is closed.* CAIAPHAS *and* GAMALIEL *come forward, R.*]

CAIAPHAS

There is no other course. He must not live.
And, since this Roman will not strike the blow —

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GAMALIEL

There might be yet another way to reach him —
A secret way.

CAIAPHAS

No secret way can be, in this, so good
As the plain, open way. Our cause is just:
We need not stain it. He shall have a trial,—
That all the people may behold his guilt,
And the just vengeance of the outrag'd Law.

GAMALIEL

But how to seize him?
His rabble followers are numerous.
There would be rioting, if he were taken
In open day.

CAIAPHAS

He must be set on in some lonely place.
They say that he retires into such places,
From time to time, with but a few companions.
If one of these same credulous attendants
Could be induced to whisper — his reward
Would not be stinted.

GAMALIEL

There's one of them — a dark and dangerous man —
Who might, I think, be tempted: not with gold.
He left a craft of some emolument,
To tend upon this prophet.
He is ambitious, craving honor, power,

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And much he talks of freedom for our race.
I know the man; Judas, by name; from Kerioth.
And, lately, when I spoke with him, his words
Were discontented and of dubious import.
If his tongue were loosed —
But yonder comes the man, seeking his fellows,
No doubt, in Simon's house.

[*Enter* JUDAS, *R.* *He goes slowly toward the house of* SIMON, *L.* *He is moody and self-absorbed, not seeing anything around him.*]

CAIAPHAS

There is some mystery here. Call him, Gamaliel.

GAMALIEL

A greeting to thee, Judas!

JUDAS

[*Startled and turning quickly.*]

And to thee! Who is it calls?

GAMALIEL

The High Priest of Jerusalem.

CAIAPHAS

[*Advancing.*]

Blessing upon thee, Judas!
The priesthood of our holy Temple grieves
At thy defection. Art thou going there —
Even to that false prophet?

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JUDAS

Thou hast said.

CAIAPHAS

Men say that thou art one of his close friends,
Art trusted by him. Yet he spurns the Law,
And hath profaned the Temple. What hast thou
To do with such a man?

JUDAS

He promis'd the deliverance of our race, —
And I believed him.

CAIAPHAS

Dost believe him still?
The Roman rules. Our race is still in bondage.
Thou wert accounted once a godly man,
A wise man, Judas:
How canst thou consort with these credulous fools,
And trust in idle tales and promises?

JUDAS

Caiaphas —

CAIAPHAS

Answer, my son; and speak as to a friend.

JUDAS

He said he would establish upon earth
Peace, righteousness, and freedom for mankind.
I thought to see him break the Roman yoke;
Give back the land to us of Abraham's seed:

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Yet when he enter'd — at the Passover —
When all was ready, and the hour had struck;
When all Judea hunger'd for the word;
The craven paus'd.
I would have said it, though a million lives
Hung in the balance.
I saw him falter, and I knew him then
For what he is — a man of dreams and precepts.
Meekness and gentleness are all his talk:
There is no storm of wrath in his weak spirit,
To blast and shatter these accurséd Romans;
To break our chains, and wipe away our shame.

CAIAPHAS

Talkers, it hath been said, are seldom doers.

JUDAS

The people thronged around him, wild with hope,
Shouting, and waving palms. That was his hour!
And yet he held his peace; I bade my heart
Have patience, hoping yet to strike the blow.
But, yesterday —

CAIAPHAS

Well? What of yesterday?

JUDAS

One of the multitude had asked of him,
'Shall we pay any tribute unto Cæsar?
Tribute? Since thou wilt found a kingdom for us?'
Then answered he, obsequious and timid,

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'Render to Cæsar whatsoever things
Belong to Cæsar!'
From that base instant I have hated him,
Even as once I loved him. All my love
Is chang'd into a frenzy of contempt.
Within my brain there is a surging fire,
And all the world seems drench'd in seas of blood.
This night shall end it. I will break the chain.

CAIAPHAS

Be patient, Judas.
Thy spirit did but slumber. 'Tis awake.
What if I show thee now an easy way
To make atonement for thy simple error?
A ready means of just resentment, Judas,
Is close at hand — clear, swift, and terrible.

JUDAS

What means?

CAIAPHAS

Is he not guilty? Hath he not defied
The holy Priesthood? Doth he not declare
That he is judge and lord, above the Law?
Should he escape his doom? Observe me, Judas,
And consider well what might be done for Justice.
Should he not — die?

JUDAS

The Sanhedrim hath power. It may do much.
It can do what it will.

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CAIAPHAS

Thou dost not, — or thou wilt not, — understand.
We need thy help. We cannot apprehend him
In open day. The multitude is fickle.
He hath a faction. We must move with prudence.
Let him be dragg'd but to our judgment seat,
Our friends will rally and the blow will fall
Before the rabble knows it.

JUDAS

Well. Say on.

CAIAPHAS

By night, in secret, we must seize this man,
And so make sure of him.
Some one who knows his haunts, his secret refuge,
Must lead the way.
Then we can throw the noose and take our foe.
He that will help us in this pious work —
I tell thee, Judas,
He shall have honor throughout Israel!
Plaudits and riches shall be heaped upon him,
And evermore his name shall be extoll'd
Among the foremost names of all the race
His fortitude and wisdom have preserved.

JUDAS

You ask me to betray the Nazarene.
It may be right there should be such a service:
I cannot tell: but — I am not the man
To do that service.

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CAIAPHAS

And yet you hate him.

JUDAS

Once I loved him, too.
If that was sin, I do repent of it.
But, I cannot forget.
My heart is bruis'd and broken, when I think
Of all I once believ'd, and hop'd, and trusted.
But — I cannot betray him. Fare you well.
My lips are seal'd.
But, to betray him — it can never be.
For that base office — you must seek another.
[*Exit* JUDAS, *into the house of* SIMON, *L.*]

CAIAPHAS

I think he wavers: we shall have him yet. —
A curse upon this prophet!
Even upon them that hate him hath he laid
A spell of magic.

GAMALIEL

Will Judas warn him, think you, of his peril?

CAIAPHAS

What warning could be given, or would avail?
He knows, full well, we are his enemies,
And knows the storm is up.
The thing he does not know is, how or when
The storm will break.

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We must be brief, and, when we strike, our blow
Be deadly.
This very night the council must assemble.
Make haste, Gamaliel: summon the Sanhedrim.
This Judas speaks too much of rectitude
To be sincere. We shall hear from him yet, —
At midnight, in the Temple, let us meet.

[*Exit* CAIAPHAS, *into his house, R. Exit* GAMALIEL, *R. U. E. The scene gradually grows darker. Enter, L.,* JOTHAM *and* JOAB, *frolicsome with wine.* JOTHAM *enters first, talking to* JOAB.]

JOTHAM

Come boldly forth, thou sucking dove of virtue!
Lamb of the sacred Law, be comforted!
Thy very reverend sire hath sought his ark.

JOAB

Saw'st thou his angry face?

JOTHAM

Indeed did I!
His eyes were lightnings. For a man of God,
Thy virtuous parent shows capacity
For something like the Devil, in his wrath.

JOAB

I would not be like yonder Galilean —
No, not for Mary's self! and that's a prize
Might tempt an anchorite. — There's danger near.

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JOTHAM

[*Seeing* HARAN, *L., as* SIMON'S *door is opened.*]

Who comes? The valiant Haran! Now indeed
We shall have news.

[*Enter* HARAN, *from* SIMON'S *house, L.*]

Hast thou escaped, O Daniel, from the lions?

HARAN

I shall be ever thankful that I've seen him.
He's like no other man I ever saw.
The light from his great eyes is like pure gold;
His brow is like the dome of cloudless heaven.

JOTHAM

And thou a gull that screams along the blue.

HARAN

I tell thee, Jotham, that the man is noble,
And if you but come nigh him — either of you —

JOAB

There's one of us would win his father's curse,
And be cast forth without inheritance.
But, tell us, Haran:
Mary of Magdala came here to see him.
Didst thou see her?

HARAN

Ay! and a sight most wonderful it was.
I pressed on, to the threshold of the room

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In which he sat, 'circled with his companions.
There was a sudden tumult: then a woman,
Clad all in black, fell down before the prophet,
Weeping, and calling blessings on his head.
He raised her from her knees, and his calm eyes
Look'd on her with such kindness, such compassion,
That mine were filled with tears, that blinded me.
When next I saw, she broke a box of perfume;
And with the ointment, murmuring, she refresh'd him.
Never yet
Have I beheld such beauty, or such sorrow,
Or such an ecstasy of pure contrition,
In any human face.

JOTHAM

She is a witch. The net is spread for all;
And saints are free to come, as well as sinners.

HARAN

Then some one said, the costly spikenard
Might have been sold, for money, for the poor.
'Let her alone,' he said, 'she hath done well;
The poor are always with you; I, not always.
Soon I shall be gone.'
Then he arose, and I was pressed away,
In the dense crowd.

JOTHAM

They say he hath a charm, and they say true.
I must believe it, since on thee the spell
Hath wrought so mightily.

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But come? Since now we are returned to seek thee,
'Tis only fair to try a counter charm —
The wine of Samos.

HARAN

No, friend; my mind is not for revelry.

JOAB

Thou art our guest, I will not take denial.
It must be mine to see thou dost depart,
As sound as when thou camest.
Stay not for Mary! Hester waits for thee.

JOTHAM

Come, Haran, come.

[JOTHAM *and* JOAB *urge* HARAN *and the three go away together, by street, L. Then enter* MARY, *from* SIMON'S *house, L., followed by* RACHEL *and* JUDAS.]

JUDAS

No more! I'll bear no more! I have endur'd
Too much, already. False and wanton woman!
Hast thou forgotten all thy vows of love?
I say thou art mine! Thou dost belong to me.

MARY

Neither to thee, nor yet to any man,
Nor to myself! Henceforward, every thought,
And every hour of mine, shall be devoted
To penitence and prayer.

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JUDAS

[*Ironically.*]

Thy penitence is like thy faith to me, —
A falsehood and a mockery — for the moment.
This man of words, I think, hath turned thy brain.
Let's have no more of this! I'm weary of it.
Enough, for once, of thy fine mummery!
It was well done; but I do know thee, Mary,
And I am not deceived.
Thou wert a pretty image, on thy knees,
Incarnate of repentance.

MARY

[*With ecstasy.*]

What should the creature do, but cast herself
At her creator's feet?
He hath created me — made me anew —
And henceforth I will live for only worship.

JUDAS

These pious ecstasies have all been mine,
And all will die, as mine did. Thou wilt find
This world is never very credulous
As to repentant sinners.

MARY

This world and I are very far asunder.

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JUDAS

Thou'lt find the world the stronger of the two.
Thou art consum'd with idle vanity.

MARY

With grief, that struggles to the light of heaven,
And, blindly groping, only asks for pardon.
For the first time in all my wretched life,
I can look up — can dare to hope for peace.
I am no more a thing of man's pollution,
Sinking in gulfs of shame. I can look up —
For God will pity me,
And on the desert of my soul will shed
The dew of mercy.

JUDAS

Miserable dreamer!
Thou art the same frail creature of the earth
That thou hast ever been.

MARY

Hear me and heed me, Judas. Full of sin
Hath been my life. It shall be so no more.
Our evil days of love are past and gone.
Henceforth, twixt you and me there is no bond,
But only silence and forgetfulness.
Thou art forgiven. Go thy ways in peace.
Thou might'st have tried to save me from myself.
It is no matter. Fare thee well, forever.

[*Exit* MARY, *R., followed by* RACHEL. *The scene is gradually darkened.*]

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JUDAS

[*Alone.*]

Dream thy vain dream!
Till one day thou shalt wake, and know thy folly!
Even as I did waken, so shalt thou;
And in that hour thou wilt remember Judas.
What now? I held thee precious among women!
With all thy faults I lov'd thee! Now, my heart
Knows its full desolation. Every hope
I had on earth is blasted, at one blow.
My race betray'd, and the one only heart
On which I rested bitterly beguil'd
And turn'd against me!

[*He makes a gesture of menace toward the home of* SIMON.]

Put on thy armor, Judas! Be thy heart
Fenc'd round with triple brass, that never arrow
Of word or look from him shall pierce it more.
I will confront him and renounce him now!

[*He turns L. The scene has become dark. Enter* FLAVIUS, *R., preceded by* MACRO *with a lighted torch.*]

FLAVIUS

[*Aside, seeing* JUDAS.]

The doughty champion of the Magdalen!

[FLAVIUS *advances, addressing* JUDAS.]

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Hail, noble Judas! Pink of chivalry!
What doth the true believer in the dark,
When all is light within?

JUDAS

Neither my darkness nor my light is thine—
[*Aside.*]
At least not yet.

[*Going, L.*]

FLAVIUS

Stay yet a moment. Do not gnash thy teeth.
I would have speech with thee.
Thy lord and master, whom I heard to-day,
Hath taught a goodly lesson to his people.
'Love your enemies! Bless them that curse you!
Do good to them that have done ill to you!'
Hast heard of this wise counsel?

JUDAS

And didst thou hear it, Roman? Have such words
Passed from his lips?

FLAVIUS

Most certainly they have!
And very good words, too, as I consider,—
That all his followers would do well to heed.
There has been talk of insurrection:
A man named Judas has not been quite silent.

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My uncle Pilate wished to probe the matter,
And so I wandered into Simon's garden,
And heard the preachments. Rome is still secure.
I do assure thee,
Thy master is all peace and harmony.
No war for him; no plotting; no disturbance!
'Love all your enemies;' that's what he said.
Why not begin with me?

JUDAS

The curse of Cain upon thy hated race!

FLAVIUS

And yet, friend Judas, thou wilt have to yield.
Thy leader is content: thy wolves are sheep, —
His sheep, — and he will help to gather them,
In the great pasture of the shepherd, Cæsar.
Pilate will one day send him to the Emperor, —
Even to Rome, — for thanks and recompense.
'Tis fair in Rome. Thou knowest naught of pleasure
Till thou hast seen our glorious capital.
Farewell, great Judas. Love your enemies!

[*Exeunt* FLAVIUS *and* MACRO, *L.*]

JUDAS

We are to bear the yoke of slavery,
And kiss the scourge, e'en though it drips with blood.
These are his teachings: this the end of all:
Dishonor, degradation, lasting shame! —
And we must love and bless the proud oppressor,

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And kiss the hoof that treads us in the mire! —
Shaming our sires, in desecrated graves,
And winning curses from our children's lips.
It shall not be! No, not while Judas lives.

[JUDAS *stands for a moment in thought and passionate conflict. Then he goes quickly toward the door of the High Priest's house, R. At the same moment the door is opened and* CAIAPHAS *appears on the threshold, attended by a Servant, bearing a torch.*]

CAIAPHAS

Who seeks the High Priest of Jerusalem?

JUDAS

One who brings tidings you'll be glad to hear.

CAIAPHAS

[*Recognizing Judas, whose face is illumined in the torch-light.*]

Judas!

[*Picture.*]

CURTAIN

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ACT IV

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ACT IV

SCENE: Room in MARY's house

Same as that of Act I. MARY *and* RACHEL *are discovered.* MARY *reads from a parchment that is spread before her, on table.*

MARY

[*Reading.*] 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood so is my belovéd among the sons. . . . I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.'

RACHEL

Wilt thou not eat, lady?
Thy fast hath been full long and thou art weak.

MARY

Bring the lamp, Rachel. It grows very dark. [*Exit* RACHEL, *L.* MARY *continues reading.*] 'My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. . . . The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come—' [*Reënter* RACHEL, *bearing a lighted lamp, which she places on the table.*] 'My beloved is mine and I am his. He feedeth among the lilies.'

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RACHEL

Thou wilt be ill with fasting — very ill.
A morsel of lamb — a handful of dates —

MARY

'Until the day break and the shadows flee away' —
O Rachel, I've no need of anything!
Through him, at last, I have learned happiness —
The peace that feeds the hunger of the soul,
For all is peace with him.

RACHEL

If thou hadst peace thou wouldst sometimes have sleep,
And not be reading, all the livelong night,
These Scriptures, till thine eyes are worn and hollow.
Three days — and not one friend has been admitted,
Nor have we crossed the threshold all that time.

MARY

Because, at last, my soul hath found a friend;
Because, at last, I need no friend but him.

RACHEL

Thy friend? And yet he tarries far away.
Why dost not send for him?

MARY

O Rachel! That thou dost not understand!
I am not worthy that his sacred hand
Should rest upon my head.

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His love is for the world — for the whole world!
His love belongs to all.
Into his heavenly kingdom he will lead them —
All that are clean of heart. And that am I —
For he hath made me so: and ever that
I will remain.

RACHEL

Thy thoughts are strange: I cannot follow them.
I only see that thou art worn and ill.
A fever dries thy blood.
Let us go forth into the evening air.
Thy garden walks are cool, under the trees;
And, later, thou wilt sleep.

MARY

I love not sleep that brings no dream of him.

RACHEL

Lady, my heart is breaking with my sorrow.
I could not live if thou wert taken from me.

[*Knocking at the door, C.*]

MARY

See who is there. Let no one come to me.

[RACHEL *goes to door, C.*]

MARY

[*Murmurs to herself, in meditation.*]

'Until the day break and the shadows flee away.'

[RACHEL *returns to* MARY.]

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RACHEL

It is the Roman, Aulus Flavius.

MARY

Flavius? Hath he forgot? I will not see him.
Send him away.

RACHEL

He says he will not go till thou hast heard him.
He says he brings thee tidings of the Master.

MARY

Of him? Then quickly let him come to me.

[RACHEL *goes to door, C., and admits* FLAVIUS.]

Can it be true that he has thought of me?

[*Exit* RACHEL, *L.*]

Of me, that am no more than is a mote
That wavers in the sunbeam of his vision!

[FLAVIUS *advances.*]

FLAVIUS

Thou hast forbidden me thy presence, Mary;
And yet I come once more.

MARY

Thou hast a message. Is it, then, from him?

FLAVIUS

I come but from myself.

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MARY

Unworthy subterfuge! Thou hast deceived me
To gain admittance. But it shall not serve.
Thou dost not know the heart that thou would'st wrong.

FLAVIUS

Nor dost thou know the constant heart of Flavius.
The message that I bring is one of grief,
And yet of grief that may be turned to joy.
Thou wilt be grieved to know they have seized thy prophet,
Scourged him with whips, and set upon his brows, —
Since he hath called himself 'King of the Jews,' —
A crown of thorns.

[FLAVIUS *sits.*]

MARY

Crowned him with thorns? What idle tale is this?

FLAVIUS

Ay, in contempt and scorn. Your priests hate well,
And they are merry hangmen.

MARY

Thou canst not mean it, Aulus Flavius!
Tell me the rest! Tell all!
For these three days I have not left my home.
No voice hath spoken to me of the city.
What dreadful thing hath chanced, and who hath done it?

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FLAVIUS

Thy friend hath enemies. The priesthood hates him.
He knew his danger, for he took good care.
They could not come upon him but by stealth.
'Twas in a garden, at Gethsemane,
He thought himself secure, with his companions.
There was, I hear, some traitor in the fold.
They stole upon him suddenly, with guards,
Bound him with chains, and hurried him to prison.

MARY

The Lord will loose his bonds: the Lord will help him.
The Lord will shatter all his enemies.

FLAVIUS

The Lord, it seems, hath overlooked this matter.
The priesthood of the Temple hath prevailed.
From the High Priest they brought him to my uncle.
The charge was treason — treason against Rome —
That he had sought to seize Judea's crown.

MARY

[*Rising, in agony of suspense.*]

And what said Pilate?

FLAVIUS

We Romans, whom the Jews denounce as tyrants,
Are little like your priestly potentates, —
The mad fanatics of your gloomy race, —

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Cruel and fierce and ruthless. Pilate said:
'This man is innocent and should go free:
I find no harm in him: he is a dreamer.'
But, while he stood in patient silence by,
The angry multitude cried 'Death' upon him.
Then Pilate washed his hands, and, turning, said,
'Lo! I am innocent of this man's blood:
Do with him as you will.'
And then the populace — the dear, sweet people —
Bore off their victim. — To-morrow —

[MARY *sinks to the floor.*]

Mary!

[FLAVIUS *springs up and raises* MARY.]

Be calm! Be strong! All is not lost.

MARY

Yea, thou art right; he will not be forsaken!
His faithful followers — they that loved him so —
Will they not break the prison where he lies,
And save their Master?

FLAVIUS

The cowards! They have fled like trembling sheep,
That see their shepherd mangled by the wolf.
'Twas one of them betrayed him unto Caiaphas, —
Where, in a garden of Gethsemane,
By night and secretly, he might be taken.

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MARY

[*With thought of* JUDAS.]

Who was it? God of Zion! if *that* were true!
No—no—I cannot think it. [*With sudden resolution*]
I thank thee. Fare thee well.

FLAVIUS

Where wilt thou go?

MARY

To Simon—to his followers—to them all,
To ask if they can live, when he is dead.
And, if shame burns the heart of none of them,
To think of him, abandoned, in his woe,
Then to the High Priest of Jerusalem!
Surely my prayers and tears will melt his heart.

FLAVIUS

A stone were easier melted than the heart
Of that fierce priest. Nay, Mary, do not hope it.
Thy friend is lost,—unless a miracle [*Significantly*]
Be wrought to bring him rescue.

MARY

There is some way to save him. There must be.
And thou dost know it, Flavius.

FLAVIUS

Perhaps there is one way to help thee, Mary.
As yet he lives.
There is one other night before his doom,

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And in a night — this night — there's much may happen.
'Twould not be easy: yet it might be done.
My kinsman, Pilate, still hath power to free him,
And Pilate loves me well. Were I to urge
His swift release, with certain reasons for it —
Reasons of State, — (my uncle hath no heart
In this bad business, and his wife has begged him,
By every means, to stop it,) — very like
He would accept my counsel.

MARY

At last I see thee truly, as thou art, —
Noble and good!
Ah, Flavius, let me kneel and kiss thy hand,
Thy bounteous hand, that gives me more than life.

FLAVIUS

I said perchance I *might* — not that I *would!*

MARY

But, if this deed were possible at all,
Thou would'st make haste to do it.
Think, good Flavius! He lies in chains!
He is condemned to death!

FLAVIUS

And am I not in chains? Do I not suffer?
O Mary, from the hour when first we met,
My heart has had no other pulse but love —

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No other thought by day nor dream by night,
But of thy peerless beauty. All the world
Is desolate for me when thou art gone.
Canst thou not whisper any word of hope
To him that loves thee better than his life?
Canst thou not cast aside this strange delusion —
This fevered dream of something in the clouds —
That hath so changed thy nature?

MARY

It is changed. I do not understand thee.

FLAVIUS

I love thee, Mary.
And wilt thou give me not a single smile?
A single kiss? Ah, Mary, do not scorn me!
We will go far from here. We'll dwell together,
Where none will trouble us, or know the past,
And we'll be happy, Mary!

MARY

Thou darest to think —

FLAVIUS

I think of nothing but thy beauty, Mary.
Thy beauty and my love. Thou shalt decide.
I've said that I can save him — and I will.
Be mine — and he is saved. Wake from this dream.
I give thee time to choose.
At midnight I will knock upon thy door
To know thy answer.

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[FLAVIUS *goes out hurriedly, C.* MARY *sinks down at couch.* RACHEL *enters, L. U. E., crosses to C., and bars the door. She quickly goes out, L. U. E.*]

MARY

O nameless torture! Lifting me to heaven,
Only to hurl me to the depths of hell!
Demon! Demon! Demon!
Father in heaven, descend upon my soul
And light my way, that I may know Thy will.
Thou knowest I have struggled toward the light,
Tried to be worthy, kneeling at the feet
Of him, the holy one, Thy messenger!
And must I now be thrust back into shame?
Sink till the tide of death flow over me —
The black and hideous waves, that gulf the soul —
And I be lost forever?
Give me a sign, that I may know my doom! . . .
Silence and darkness! . . . Stealthy feet of sin
Creep toward my dwelling, in the treacherous night.
No hand is raised to save, no voice of doom
To fright this reptile horror from my door.
I am alone, and utterly forsaken.
What doth it matter? — Though my heart be clean,
This, my poor body, is dishonored so,
That all the tears of all the world were vain
To wash away my sins. Thy will be done!
The sacrifice be Thine!

[*With great passion and a lamentable cry.*]

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But if I give myself to this defilement,
Endure this shame, make this dread sacrifice, —
In the abhorrent night of my despair,
Where shall I turn for peace?

[*Enter* JUDAS, *R.* MARY *rises.*]

JUDAS

The door was barred. I found another way —
Across thy garden wall.
I have a word that must be said to thee,
And thou must hear it.

MARY

[*Retreating from* JUDAS.]

No words of thine — nor looks — nor anything!
I shudder to behold thee! Come not near!
Thou art *accurs'd.* 'Tis thou hast done this deed.

JUDAS

Who tells thee so?

MARY

Thy face hath told me. There's no need of words.

JUDAS

He was the public enemy — and mine!
The man was not my brother. Does a brother
Blast a man's heart — his pride — his faith — his hope?
Make him a beggar first, and then a recreant?
Did I not give up all, to follow him?
Count on the hour when he should bid us strike,

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And slay the Roman?
And did he not, at last, desert our cause, —
Bidding us love our enemies and bless them?

MARY

And to this fiend I gave a woman's love!

JUDAS

They thought 'twas gold that tempted me; the fools!
I cast it in their faces. All the treasure
That's heaped within the Temple could not bless me,
As doth the knowledge that my soul is free.
Judas will be no dupe. *'Twas* I that did it!
And I have saved Judea from her shame.
I know the lips of slaves will utter curses
Upon the name of Judas. Be it so!
Weakness still hateth strength. My vindication
Will be the praise of every patriot heart
That beats for Israel.

MARY

[*Lamentations, outside, are audible.*]

Forbear thy raving! Peace, I say! Depart!
Go from my home. Here is no place for thee.
And never let me see thy face again.

JUDAS

Thou sayest well. Here is no place for me.
The doors of all Jerusalem are clos'd,
And I must be an outcast evermore.

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The number of the fools that follow him
Is great, and madness may give folly power.
They call it treachery, which was their rescue.
Even the priests may not avail to shield me.
I will betake me to some other place,
Where there's no blight upon the name of Judas.
But not alone: thou shalt go with me, Mary.

MARY

Thou art mad!

JUDAS

Mad were I, if I left my love behind —
Only to brood, in my new dwelling-place,
On all her life, and light, and joy, and splendor,
When she revives and is herself again.
My hopes are shatter'd, like a broken reed.
My soul is full of wrath and bitterness.
I have lost all but thee. This is the end.
Mine art thou, soul and body — wholly mine!
Therefore make ready to depart with me.
To-morrow, at the dawn, I'll come for thee.

MARY

To-morrow will be mine — and what it brings
Will be my secret, and my destiny.

JUDAS

I know thy thought — to testify thy faith;
There, in the track that leads to Gólgotha.
Thou would'st cast down thy body, where the feet

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Of the vile rabble and the hoofs of horses
Might trample thee to death. Thou shalt not do it.
Behold! the hand of Judas shall prevent thee,
And stay thy madness.

[JUDAS *draws his dagger.*]

MARY

[*Speaking softly and slowly.*]

That way would be the shortest and the best.
That knife of thine would cut the dangerous knot,
And make all smooth. I trust the edge is keen.
I never thought that I should ask from hate
The tender help and offices of love.
But, let me tell thee —

JUDAS

Think not to escape.

MARY

There's neither thought, nor wish, nor dream of that.
Come to me at the dawning. Bring the knife.
I will lay bare my bosom, point the place,
Show thee my heart, where once it used to beat,
Even for thee.

JUDAS

Flight is impossible. Remember that.

MARY

And flight were foolish, from my only hope.
Death, at thy hand, would be a blessing, Judas.
It brings no terror. In the morning, come.
But let this night be mine. It must — it shall be.

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JUDAS

[*Sound of lamentation outside is audible.*]

What is thy purpose?

MARY

My purpose is the purpose of my fate —
Whatever that may be. This night is mine.

JUDAS

So be it, then! To-morrow, at the dawn!
Either a life with me — far off from here —
Or — in Jerusalem — a grave.

[*Exit* JUDAS, *R.* *Enter* RACHEL, *L.*]

RACHEL

No one has entered since the Roman went;
Yet, as I came, I heard another voice.

MARY

'Twas nothing; 'twas a fancy.
Where hast thou been?

RACHEL

Into the street — but only for a step.
Many are in the street. There is some trouble;
A great calamity. The people moan.
They say —

MARY

[*Interrupting her.*]

That he is bound with chains — in prison —
To-morrow will be slain.

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RACHEL

Thou knowest all.
But who hath told thee?

MARY

A demon — as I think.

RACHEL

Almighty Heaven! And thou speak'st so calmly.
This cruel thing! This butchery! This horror!

MARY

The morning light will show how calm I am!

RACHEL

Something strange sounds in thy voice, dear lady.
Try to rest.
We can do nothing: and my soul is sick
With fear for thee.

MARY

Be comforted, dear heart. All will be well.
Thou hast been kind to me. Thou wilt be glad
To see my troubles cease.
They have been heavy; they grow lighter now;
They will be gone to-morrow. Never fear!

RACHEL

If I could only see thee smile again!
I know not why — but my heart shudders when
I look upon thy face.

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MARY

Be of good cheer! There will be smiles to-morrow,
And many happy faces in the streets.
I have a thing to tell would make thee glad,
But must not tell it yet. Go to thy rest.
Bring me some wine.
There is a fire within my bosom here,
Tears cannot quench.

RACHEL

[*Sorrowfully.*]

If she could only sleep.

[*Exit* RACHEL, *L.*]

MARY

I must watch.
No rest for Mary, any more on earth.

[*She takes the parchment, as if to read.*]

No scribe hath written it — no sacred book
Can give one word of comfort.

[*Drops the parchment.*]

Not since the world began was any fate
So dread as that which hangeth over me.

[*Reënter* RACHEL, *L., bringing wine.*]

RACHEL

Thou art burnt up with fever: wilt thou feed
Oil to the flame?

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MARY

Give me the cup.

[*She seizes a cup of wine.*]

Hark! Is he come so soon?

[*Faint sound of storm.*]

RACHEL

There's no one coming.
It is the night wind shakes the door a little.
A storm is rising.

MARY

Take away the wine.
Thou art right. 'Tis better that I should not drink.
I must be gay and beautiful to-night.
It is the bridal feast.

RACHEL

Alas! Alas! Her mind is wandering.
Thou dost break my heart, with thy dark sayings.

MARY

They will all be clear. Wait but the morning.
Everything is well.
I think sometimes I've been unkind to thee —
Harsh and imperious, in my days of pride.
Thou wilt forgive me? Thou wilt speak my name,
Sometimes, with love?
Thou wilt not all forget me, when I'm gone.

RACHEL

Thou hast been very kind to thy poor Rachel;
And I have loved thee as a mother doth

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The child that she hath carried next her heart.
I could not bear to lose thee.

MARY

Be calm and listen.
It may be that I have not long to live.
Thou art the only creature in the world
Will grieve for Mary. Promise thou wilt wrap
The shroud around me. Let no hand but thine
Touch my poor body. Lay me in the grave,
And strew some flowers upon it.

RACHEL

What is it thou art saying?

MARY

We cannot know the measure of our days,
Or whether we shall see to-morrow's sun.
But I have taken careful thought of thee;
All that I have is thine. Now come and kiss me —
And then — to rest.

RACHEL

[*Embracing* MARY, *and weeping.*]

Ah, woe is me, that I should see this hour.

MARY

Hush, dear! No tears! For I shall be at rest.
Now leave me, Rachel. I would be alone.

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[*Exit* RACHEL, *sobbing, L. Occasional low sounds of storm and rushing wind should be audible, at intervals, till the end of the act, but they must be so made as not to drown the words.*]

Shall I not hear his voice? Will he not say
'Surely she hath lov'd much, and unto her
Shall much be now forgiven'—
Only to have no will—to lose all knowledge!
Be as the leaf is, that the rushing storm
Rends from the tree! Was that a footstep? Hark!
No! 'tis but the wind—
Or 'tis the blood that rushes to my brain.
I must be firm—and steadfast to my purpose;
Think but one thought—that he lies there, in chains,
And hearkens to the noises in the street,
And hears the storm, as I do.
Make sure thou art remember'd in thy woe!
The hour of thy deliverance draws near!
The soldiers shall not drag thee to the cross!
Thou shalt be saved,—and I,—poor, sinful wretch,—
I shall have part in thy deliverance.

[*Knocking at door, C.*]

Merciful heaven! It is the sound of doom!

[*She gazes wildly around, as if to escape.*]

Yea, I am ready: instantly I come.
Why do I tremble now? The way is short:
Only to draw the bolt.
I've answered other voices that I knew:
To-night it is the voice of death that speaks.

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[*Louder knocking is heard at door, C., and sound of tempest.*]

It is not midnight yet: 'tis very early.
The sun is hardly set.
Patience — have patience.
I'm worn with watching and I've wept my heart out.

[*Mary moves toward door, C.*]

FLAVIUS

[*Speaking outside.*]

It is I — Flavius — thy lover — Flavius.

MARY

A black abyss! I cannot cross it! There —
There — in the darkness — there — his face — his eyes —
They burn into my soul! I hear his voice —
'What dost thou, Mary? Art thou not redeem'd?
And wilt thou be dishonored? desecrate?'

FLAVIUS

Dost thou not hear me, Mary?

MARY

Be thou my strength! Do not forsake me now.

FLAVIUS

I see the glimmer of thy lamp within.

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MARY

Guard me, ye heavenly angels! Be my shield!

FLAVIUS

[*Departing.*]

For the last time — good night!

MARY

[*Rushes frantically at the door and hurls herself against it.*]

Flavius! Flavius!
Have mercy on me!

[*She faints and falls.*]

QUICK CURTAIN

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ACT V

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ACT V

SCENE: Near Jerusalem.

A wild ravine. In the background, rocks, through which a path, L., leads to the hill of Calvary. Another path is visible, and practicable, R. Dark sky; storm. Occasional faint flashes of lightning and dull peals of thunder.

Enter JUDAS

JUDAS

Where shall I turn — accurséd that I am?
Up to the scene of death that is my work?
Is it not evermore before my eyes?
Do I not see them bind him to the cross?
Do I not see the nails that pierce his hands?
Do I not hear the hammer strokes that drive them?
The thorns that tear his brow — do I not feel them?

[*Thunder and lightning. He falls upon the rocks.*]

The fires of hell are raging in my bosom.
Sleeping or waking, still I see his face,
And still his calm lips murmur, 'Thou art mine!
Thou canst not separate thyself from me.
I love thee, that hast been my enemy!

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I do not curse thee.'
O a thousand times
His curse were more a mercy than his pardon.
It bows me to the dust!

[*Thunder and lightning.*]

O Thou that hast the lightnings in Thy hand,
Hast Thou no bolt for this curse-laden head?

[*Peal of thunder.*]

Not one avenging stroke?
Must I live on, to be my own damnation?
He called Thee Father. I have shed his blood.
Is there no cliff whence I can cast myself
And so be dashed to pieces?

[*He starts up wildly. Flashes of lightning and loud peals of thunder.*]

It is the end!
The Lord hath come in tempest, hath descended,
And the pure soul of him, His messenger,
Is borne beyond the stars.
Where shall I turn to hide my guilty face?

[*Enter hurriedly, descending from the hill of Calvary,* HARAN.]

Thou comest from the hill of Calvary?
What didst thou see?

HARAN

Delay me not! I have beheld a sight
That drowns my senses, steeping them in blood.
My very soul shudders to think of it.

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JUDAS

Then all is over?

HARAN

A great man hath been butchered, just and wise,
To glut the anger of a jealous priesthood,
And the vile passions of a cruel mob.
The people thronged around me in such numbers
That I was like to perish. Not one hand
Was raised to save him.
Not one of all whose sickness he hath healed,
Not one of all whose hearts his love hath bless'd,
Came nigh to do him service. Then I fled.

JUDAS

Of his disciples, not a single one?

HARAN

Not one. There was not any man that dared
To tempt the anger of his brutal foes.
He was betrayed by one of his companions.

JUDAS

Which one of them? Didst thou not hear his name?

HARAN

I heard it whispered. Judas was his name —
And by that name hereafter shall be known,
Throughout the world and till the end of time,
The miscreant who doth betray his friend,

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And give the blood of trusting innocence
To ruin and to death.
Stay me no longer! I will hie away
From all the horrors of this dismal place,
Even while I can.
I was the guest of Caiaphas, the priest.
I could not look upon his face again —
The face of murder and of infamy.

[HARAN *rushes out quickly, R., toward Jerusalem. Thunder and lightning.*]

JUDAS

'And by that name hereafter shall be known,
Throughout the world and till the end of time,
The miscreant who doth betray his friend!'
So must it be. But not the voice of man
Hath any terror for the soul of Judas.
What care I for the ignorant multitude?
But if his word be true,
If that which he hath promised be fulfilled,
How shall my soul stand up before his eyes?
Where shall I hide the horror of my guilt?

[*Lamentations are heard. The multitude begin to descend the heights.*]

They come, the people, miserable dogs.
They shall not crush me underneath their feet.
Judas hath lived his life, and only Judas
Shall be his judge.

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[*Exit* JUDAS, *R.* FLAVIUS *and* CAIAPHAS *appear at top of the path from Calvary, with priests and soldiers, all descending in tumult.*]

FLAVIUS

Art thou content, O priest?
And is thy thirst for vengeance satisfied?
This was thy work — the death of innocence.
We Romans are not guilty of this blood.

CAIAPHAS

He lifted up his hand against our Law.
We judged and we condemned him.
You Romans, you have sacrificed whole peoples,
That would not bow their necks beneath your yoke —
Nations that knew you not, and over whom
You had no just dominion.
If thou didst hold him dear and think him sacred,
Why didst thou not defend him?

FLAVIUS

Would that I had! I cared not for your quarrel.
I ever took him for an idle dreamer;
But when I saw the grandeur in his face,
And heard him speak that pardon from the cross,
On thee and all thy misbegotten rabble,
I knew the man was godlike.
Haughty priest! I tell thee he was victor in this battle —
Not you, nor your dark deity of wrath!

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CAIAPHAS

Thou art an idle boy. Thy years are raw.
Tarry yet longer in Jerusalem,
And learn to know us better.

FLAVIUS

Not a day longer in this curséd place —
Foul with the taint of bigotry and blood.
To-morrow will I turn my face to Rome,
Bearing the story of this fatal deed,
Which lieth heavy on my uncle's heart.
And I will bear away the memory
Of that just man, who, from the bitter cross,
Looked down upon me with a smile of blessing.

[MARY *appears at the top of the path. She is crazed with grief.* SIMON *and* MIRIAM *are with her and strive to restrain her. She breaks from them.*]

MARY

I say release me. Who hath given you power
To stay me from my place?

FLAVIUS

Yonder she comes — poor, miserable wretch!

SIMON

Come with us, Mary. Let us lead thee home.

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MARY

I have no home, save there beneath the cross.
That is my home. Let me go back to it —
And with my tears I'll wash away the blood.

SIMON

Mary, be calm! All eyes are turned on thee.

MARY

So should they be.
When there is murder done, all eyes are turned
Upon the murderer.
Look on me, people of Jerusalem!
'Twas I that murdered him! — But not alone.
There was one other. Let it be avenged.
Are there not stones enough to strike us down?

MIRIAM

Poor soul! Her mind hath gone.

SIMON

Her words are wild.

MARY

[*Pointing to* FLAVIUS.]

Yonder he stands — and, see — he tries to smile.
He will be silent — but he knows our secret.
God will not let him ever smile again.
Good night, fair world.
Thou art a pit, and it is full of serpents.

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There was one creature in the shape of man —
But he was much too beautiful for thee.
Thou wert ashamed when he did see thy face.
Thou didst pursue him, giving him no rest.
And there was one betrayed him, in the dark.
I might have saved him. Now his shining eyes
Are closed forever.

CAIAPHAS

Take this mad woman hence, and keep her close.
She sought my door, at midnight, begging me
To set the prisoner free.
She sought his prison, offering to the watch
Her gold and jewels. Her weak brain is turned.

MARY

Look on him, people of Jerusalem.
He is the ravening wolf hath torn the lamb.
His hands are red with blood — the innocent blood.
But one day it shall be required of him!

CAIAPHAS

Seize the blaspheming wanton. To the prison!
Lest she do raise a clamor 'gainst the Temple,
And us, that have done justice on a foe.

FLAVIUS

[*Drawing his sword.*]

Let no one dare to touch her!

[*To the soldiers.*]

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Close around me!

[*The Roman soldiers press around* FLAVIUS *and shield* MARY *from the Priests of* CAIAPHAS.]

Beneath the Roman eagle she is safe!

CAIAPHAS

[*Enraged.*]

The blame be thine if violence and riot
Rage through the city. Pilate shall know all.
And we, the sacred priesthood, be assured,
Can guard ourselves.

[*Exeunt* CAIAPHAS *and Priests, R., toward Jerusalem.* FLAVIUS *approaches* MARY *and touches her hand.*]

FLAVIUS

Do you not know me, Mary?

MARY

'Tis Flavius! Bar the door. He must not enter!

FLAVIUS

Poor Mary! Flavius is indeed thy friend.

MARY

Hadst thou been so, thou wouldst have done the deed
My soul desired, saving his precious life!

FLAVIUS

It was his will to die: I could not save him.
My soul is guiltless, Mary. Come with me—

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We will go far from this polluted land.
Trust in my truth. I will protect thee, Mary,
And ask for no reward but thy forgiveness.

[*Enter* RACHEL, *R.* *She hastens to* MARY.]

MARY

Farewell. There is a friend who waits for me—
There — in my house. He will do much for love.
He says he loves me. I must go to him.
Come, Rachel.

RACHEL

Not to our home! Not thither. Terror waits—
Terror and death.

MARY

It hath no terror. Nay, it is a friend.

RACHEL

Prevent her, friends!
Upon a fig tree, in our garden, yonder,
Judas hath hanged himself. She must not know.

SIMON

Heaven be his judge — not man. Go with us, Mary.
Be as my child and I will care for thee.

MARY

I thank thee. He is waiting at the cross.
I must go home.

FLAVIUS

She knows not what she says.

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SIMON

Not at the cross, my child; he is not there.
He hath gone from us, for a little while, —
Far from us, — and our hearts are very sad.
But he will not forget us, in our sorrow;
And one day we shall see his face again.
He ever taught us to be patient, Mary.
Wilt thou not try to be so? For his sake?

MARY

Yes: he was patient — patient even with me,
That have so deeply sinned. But thou dost know
He did forgive me. All of you remember —
I was forgiven.

SIMON

We remember it.
Have comfort, Mary: all will yet be well.
There is no human soul so steeped in sin
But by repentance it may be redeemed,
And come to him.

MARY

I must go to him, now.

SIMON

That may not be. But, after many days,
If we are faithful, he will come to us.

MARY

And shall we see him, as we used to do,
And hear his voice?

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SIMON

Yes, daughter, we shall see him.
Will thou not, Mary, wait for his return?

MARY

[*Pausing.*]

And dost thou think that he will come again?
I could watch many nights. I am not weary —
Only there's something moaning at my door —
And in my heart —

SIMON

He said that he would come again; he promised.

MARY

[*In sudden ecstasy.*]

And if he promised it, he will come back.
No falsehood ever fell from those pure lips.
He will come back. He hath the power to come.
He that could raise my soul out of the grave,
He for himself can loose the bonds of death.
He will come back. It will be very soon.
I have so many things to ask of him!
I'll go with thee.
We shall be very happy when he comes.
He knows thy house. 'Twas there I saw him first.

[*The scene grows lighter.*]

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Yes, I will go with thee.
And my poor Rachel, she shall go with us.

[*The moon breaks through the storm-clouds and illumines the scene with a soft light.*]

Behold the sign! God sets it in the heavens!
He will come back!

[*Picture.*]

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